

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 18880 060846Z

13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /151 W

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R 060740Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8751

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18880

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC EXPECTATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SUMMARY: DEMOCRACY MEANS OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AND PERSONALITIES
PUEY UNGPAKORN AND PRASERT RUCHIRAWONG HAVE GIVEN RECENT NEWSPAPER
INTERVIEWS ON WHAT OPPORTUNITIES THE NEW DEMOCRACY IN BANGKOK
OFFERS THEM. STUDENT PARTICIPANTS AT THE ASIAN STUDENT ECONOMIC
CONFERENCE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROTEST AT THE KOREAN EMBASSY.
THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND IS ABOUT TO ELECT NEW
LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

1. DR. PUEY UNGPAKORN, FORMER GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF THAILAND AND
DEAN OF THE ECONOMICS FACULTY AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY, ARRIVED IN
BANGKOK YESTERDAY AFTER TWO YEARS' ABSENCE. ALTHOUGH SOME POLITICAL
PARTIES ARE ORGANIZING ON THE PLATORM THAT THEY WILL SUPPORT PUEY
FOR PRIME MINISTER, "THE NATION" QUOTES PUEY DECEMBER 6 AS SAYING
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 18880 060846Z

THAT HE DOES NOT WANT THE JOB. WHILE DENYING THAT HE HAS ANY

POLITICAL AMBITIONS, PUEY DID SIGN A PETITION ASKING FOR THE RELEASE OF THREE FORMER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WHOM THE THANOM GOVERNMENT IMPRISONED. PUEY'S COMMENTS CAME AT THE BEGINNING OF A THREE DAY VISIT.

2. PRASERT RUCHIRAWONG, FORMER POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, TALKED TO REPORTERS ON HIS BIRTHDAY DECEMBER 4. TIDYING UP HIS IMAGE, HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE HAD TURNED DOWN NUMEROUS APPEALS TO HELP STAGE A COUP BECAUSE HE SHRANK FROM POSSIBLE BLOODSHED. FURTHERMORE, HE DESCRIBED HOW COLONEL NARONG KITTIKACHORN HAD ALSO VICTIMIZED HIM. (COMMENT: THIS INTERVIEW IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THANOM AND PRAPHAT, PRASERT IS ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST MEN IN TOWN. ALTHOUGH HE HAS A WELL DESERVED REPUTATION FOR CORRUPTION, PRASERT IS THUS DEFINITELY THROWING HIS HAT, AND MONEY, INTO THE POLITICAL RING.)

3. IN A FINAL FLING AT EMBASSY HOPPING, DELEGATES FROM THE ASIAN STUDENT ECONOMIC CONFERENCE (BANGKOK 18842) DELIVERED A PROTEST NOTE AT THE KOREAN EMBASSY. "THE NATION" DECEMBER 6 QUOTES THE PROTEST NOTE, WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF THE ASIAN STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION (ASA) AS DEMANDING THE "IMMEDIATE UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF ALL THE DETAINED STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS INCLUDING THE FOUR AMNESTY BOARD MEMBERS WHO WERE ARRESTED NOVEMBER 5." THE NOTE REPORTEDLY WENT ON TO PROCLAIM THE SOLIDARITY OF THE ASA WITH KOREAN STUDENTS. THE DELEGATES THEN PAID A COURTESY CALL ON PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK AND PLACED A WREATH AT THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT WHERE THAI STUDENTS HAD DEMONSTRATED LAST OCTOBER.

4. ELECTIONS FOR SECRETARY GENERAL AND TWO DEPUTIES OF THE DOMINANT NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (BANGKOK 18300) ARE SCHEDULED DECEMBER 6 AFTER POSTPONEMENT THE PREVIOUS DAY FOR LACK OF A QUORUM. NEWSPAPER REPORTS SUGGEST THAT THE PRIMARY CONTENDERS FOR SECRETARY GENERAL ARE THANET CHAROENMUANG, A DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESIGNED NOVEMBER 18, AND SOMBAT THAMRONGTHANYAWONGSE, WHO HELD THE SECRETARY-GENERAL POSITION BEFORE THE MASS RESIGNATION. THANET, A FOUR YEAR POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENT AT CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, LOOKS LIKE THE FAVORITE. (COMMENT: STUDENT ACTIVIST SEKSAN PRASERTKUL REPORTEDLY HAS NOT BEEN NOMINATED FOR THESE ELECTIONS, WHICH MAY CONFIRM OUR IMPRESSION THAT HE IS MORE COMFORTABLE WITH HIS OWN, BUT SMALLER, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 18880 060846Z

ACTIVIST ORGANIZATION, FIST, (BANGKOK 18388).
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